



## THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 11, 1847.

### CORRESPONDENT.

We have been favored with many valuable communications, which will appear as early as possible.

### GREAT SPEECH OF MR. WEBSTER.

We present our readers with the first and only report of Mr. Webster's great speech in the Lexington case which has been made public. It will be read with profound interest by our professional friends.

### PROTEST AND REMONSTRANCE.

We would direct attention to the "Protest and Remonstrance" published on our fourth page. It is written in an excellent spirit; and, before our Southern readers condemn it, let them recollect that the authors of it are only acting upon the same principles which have long distinguished the Society of Friends, to whose course in regard to slavery they take no exception.

### MR. OWEN ON SLAVERY.

On the fourth page will be found a short article, by Mr. Owen, on Slavery. The reader must understand that we do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions of our correspondents, unless we endorse them. The Era is a Free Discussion paper.

### CROWDED.

We are unable to present the reader, this week, with our usual variety. Many selected articles of great interest have been crowded out.

### PROCEEDINGS OF CONVENTIONS.

We intend to notice the reports of the proceedings of the Conventions in Maine, Rhode Island, New York, and Northern Ohio, next week.

### COLONEL CILLEY.

A corrected report of the remarks of Col. Cilley, in support of his resolution, was designed for publication in this number, but it is unavoidably laid over one week.

### LIBERTY ADVOCATE.

In noticing last week the *Liberty Advocate*, published at Woonsocket, Rhode Island, the printer made us say it was devoted to the *Democratic cause*. So it is, but not in the technical signification. It is a *Liberty paper*.

### CONGRESS—THE GREAT QUESTION.

Attendance on the debates in Congress has occupied a large portion of our time during the last week, as the report of these debates occupies a large space in the paper. But we could not exhaust ourselves to our readers, were we to fail in reporting fully the proceedings on the Great Question now under discussion. For a view of the present state of this question, see our report.

### NEW YORK CONVENTION.

We are under great obligation to L. S. Pomeroy, one of the secretaries of the New York State Liberty Convention, for a manuscript copy of the proceedings and resolutions of the meeting. The crowded state of our columns prevents our publishing them this week. We shall find room for them next.

### YOUNG AMERICA—REFORM—WAGES SLAVERY, &c.

"Young America," of January 23, after a courteous greeting to the *Era*, proceeds to examine at length its position in relation to slavery. It says that the design of the paper is to abolish chattel slavery by substituting wages slavery; that this "one idea" is but half an idea; and that the change of chattel slavery for wages slavery, which is growing to an intolerable burden, is an object unuttered worthy of us.

"The want of a recognition of man's right to the use of the earth as an essential to freedom has caused abolitionists, heretofore, to advocate the abolition of chattel slavery as an argument, based on false principles; and this has given the advocates of that peculiar institution an advantage in upholding it. For instance: abolitionists have said to the human chattel proprietors, Free your slaves, (retaining your land) and you will compel them to work for each other for wages, and get more work from them than could be obtained by dominion, the fear that the slaves might escape to regions where they could obtain land for themselves, and other considerations, have prevented the slaveholders from acceding to the argument of the abolitionists, while they were free to revolt by comparing the condition of their slaves with that of landless hirelings, and by showing that hirelings were more likely to revolt against their taskmasters."

"Some abolitionists, who are beginning to have a correct notion of the matter, still maintain that to abolish chattel slavery is the proper first step towards complete freedom; but this argument is refuted by their own former argument, that men would do more work as hirelings than as chattels, and consequently diminish the market price of labor. This is a palpable falsehood. The process of investigation, that there is no more practicable and effectual first step towards the abolition of slavery, of every kind, than to limit the individual acquisition of land hereafter to a sufficiency for the support of one family; and it seems to me that a non-slavery paper at the seat of Government, which of all places it was most needful, ought to have been prepared to occupy the true advanced position."

"The true advanced position," if we understand the editor, is presented in his "Issues for 1847—Land Limitation, Inalienable Homestead, and Freedom of the Public Lands."

We shall take this occasion to suggest some general views in relation to reforms, as well as to point out what, in our opinion, is a serious error in the creed of the advocates of Land Reform. They entertain many just sentiments, with which we sympathize. We, too, seek the elevation of the masses. Labor ought to command more respect, and a better compensation. We should rejoice were the laborer to gain as much by the power of machinery as does the capitalist. Right measures, wisely directed, for the protection of labor against the oppressive impositions of capital, will always command our support. It is vitally important that Government do all it can, legitimately, to prevent oppressive land monopolies, multiply freeholders, and secure to all equal facilities for obtaining a home. That there are serious evils arising from the absorption, by a few property holders, of large landed estates; from the influence of overgrown wealth, and the too great dependence of the laborer; and that labor-saving machinery has generally added more to the power of the employer than employed, few will deny. Now, as it was in the days of Solomon, the rich man's wealth is his strong tower, and the destruction of the poor is his poverty.

But, to what extent can these evils be remedied? While our faith in the progress of humanity is immovable, we do not look for a millennium in the present order of things. So long as man shall be born of woman, there will be suffering, physical and moral, social and personal, because there will be ignorance and crime, accidents and vicissitudes of circumstances and seasons. And there will always be inequalities of wealth, intelligence, and influence, because minds will always differ in qualities and power. This earth is the school, not the home, of man. He is here a probationer, not a permanent dweller. The adverse circumstances about him, if he view and use them aright, will serve to develop and discipline his nature for a higher sphere. Faith, patience, self-denial, power of endurance, energy of will—what were man without these enabling attributes? But how are these to be acquired where there are perils, temptations, privations, misfortunes, to be battled with? Virtue, where it costs nothing, loses half its divinity. It is the fire that purifies from dross.

Still, it is a high duty to labor for the melioration of the conditions of humanity. There is no danger that they will ever become too favorable to human character. No outward reform that

\* See speech of Mr. Peckham, in Congress, some years ago.

can effect will ever bring about perfect harmony between his circumstances and his highest good. It is instructive to watch the extremes into which the teachers and reformers of mankind are apt to run. One class expects to accomplish all that is necessary by providing for spiritual wants. Make a man a convert to a religious creed, and bring him into the church, and the entire law of love is fulfilled. He may be ignorant. What of that? He knows his catechism. His body may be in rags. How should that concern us? Is he not clothed with all Christian graces? He may be out of employment. What then? He has the more time for religious enjoyment. He may be starving. Ah! he is an heir of eternal life! What more does he need?

So reason these reformers, and they are ready to denounce as infidels any general scheme for remedying the social evils under which mankind is laboring. They do not dream that Christian benevolence embraces within its ample scope bodily as well as spiritual good; contemplates responsible conduct on the part of man as in heaven; enjoins us to seek the improvement of the outward condition as well as of the "inner man." The effect is in every way injurious. The world is robbed of a portion of the blessings Christ designed to confer, and Christianity is circumscribed in its influence.

His whole life is marked by the most monstrous inconsistencies. The chain of infidelity for the Pope arises from his most dreadful ire; but exact conformity to his ideas of right, he demands, under pain of the most withering anathemas. Sectarian abominates; but in furiously demanding every man who will not step within the chosen circle of reform to which he belongs, he exhibits its most revolting features. The truth he abhors; but he never hesitates to misrepresent and caricature an adversary. Carnal weapons he deprecates; but the malignity which in other cases tortures the body, is poured out with corroding rancor on the spirit of an opponent. The sword he lays aside, but with a "long set fire by hell," seethes and devours whatever crosses his path.

Another class of reformers, in view of the imperfect results of this exclusive spiritualism, go to the other extreme, and devote themselves to a material philanthropy. They act as if men were to live by bread alone. Their view is fixed chiefly upon the wants and sufferings of the body; upon the poverty and inequalities everywhere existing; and their scheme of reform proposes a radical change in the circumstances of society, in the condition of man, as the one thing needful.

Both classes are wrong, because each is one-sided and exclusive. The idea of both should be combined. Circumstances of power, but not all-powerful; for man is a free agent. Society acts upon the individual, and the individual upon society. Outward conditions modify internal attributes, but these in turn work radical changes in the former. The material and the spiritual exert reciprocal influence—material improvements paving the way for spiritual progress, and spiritual reform furnishing correctives for material evil.

Christianity was certainly intended to operate both upon society and the individual, upon condition and character, upon a man's relations to this earth and to Heaven—upon society, through its development of the individual; upon condition, through its creation of character; upon a man's relations to earth, through his relations to Heaven; bestowing primary attention upon the greater interests.

The *Charleston Mercury* sympathizes with the *Washington Era* in its indignation against the Northern and Western Democracy, because they are unwilling to lay a tax on tea and coffee, the chief burthen of which every body knows would fall upon their constituents. A more unequal tax could not be laid.

"While pursuing such a course of policy," says the *Mercury*, "those Democrats might spare the Whigs, and Whigs might spare the Democrats, the further division of the nice points of political difference, which are now in play, will be of little comfort to the enemy—they are all opposed of the way—opposed to the Administration—and the best unattractive, you will have gained power enough to triumph over the outward, and rejoice even in adversity."

Reformers in England have sought the regeneration of the masses, at one time by a reform bill, at another by change in the poor laws, at another by colonization, at another by repeal of the corn laws. Reformers in this country rely upon communism, association, free trade, or land reform, as the panacea for all social diseases. With some of these measures we most heartily sympathize, but none can reach the root of the evil. At best, they can but palliate mischiefs, and remove a few obstacles out of the path of progress. It is the best possible. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added." Conform yourself to the laws of God, and you will change outward condition so as to make it promote good instead of evil; or, if this be unattainable, you will have gained power enough to triumph over the outward, and rejoice even in adversity.

Reformers in England have sought the regeneration of the masses, at one time by a reform bill, and in the slave States one-third of the population does not use it; or, if there be exceptions now, there would be none the prices raised, as they would be by the duty. Now, as the *Mercury* is a Democrat of the strictest sect, and is a great stickler for the doctrine of equal rights and equal burdens, we submit to it, whether a direct tax, which, while bearing upon every man, woman, and child, at the North, would also operate upon every freedman of the South, and three-fifths of the slave population, is not a fairer tax than tea and coffee? We are inclined to think that, were such a project seriously proposed, the *Mercury* would be found "giving aid and comfort to the enemy"—among "the very best friends of the Mexicans."

What says the *Mercury* to a direct tax? Every body in the free States drinks tea or coffee; and by the great body of the industrial classes and farming population, the consumption is immense; but in the slave States one-third of the population does not use it; or, if there be exceptions now, there would be none the prices raised, as they would be by the duty. Now, as the *Mercury* is a Democrat of the strictest sect, and is a great stickler for the doctrine of equal rights and equal burdens, we submit to it, whether a direct tax, which, while bearing upon every man, woman, and child, at the North, would also operate upon every freedman of the South, and three-fifths of the slave population, is not a fairer tax than tea and coffee? We are inclined to think that, were such a project seriously proposed, the *Mercury* would be found "giving aid and comfort to the enemy"—among "the very best friends of the Mexicans."

Statesmen south of Mason and Dixon's line are generally pretty good authorities in the political world, for the best of all reasons—they are the workers.

The following extract from an article in the *Charleston Courier*, is a very frank exposition of the objects and policy of the present war. It has been published before, but it is always full of instruction to our Democratic friends:

"THE OBJECTS OF THE MEXICAN CONQUEST."

"Besides, every battle fought in Mexico, and every dollar spent there, but insures the acquisition of territory, which must widen the field of Southern enterprise and power in the future. And the final result will be, that the South will be dominant in the Confederacy, so as to give us control over the operations of the Government in all time to come. If the South be true to themselves, the day of depression is gone, and gone forever."

"This is perceived in other quarters; and the day is not far off, from such a combination as the North as may overtake the Administration and Congress."

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penalty of an infamous law, and at the same time preached Christ to the Athenians. "Ah! what trickery!" exclains our model reformer. To think that he should have so demanded himself! Doubtless it was "exceedingly judicious;" but think you one of us would have been so tame?

There were different species of reformers among Christ's followers, some of them pretty fair types of the class under consideration. On a certain occasion, a disciple said unto Jesus, "We saw one casting out devils, and forbade him because he followed not us." "He was a true man," exclains our model reformer. "He may be ignorant. What of that? He knows his catechism. His body may be in rags. How should that concern us? Is he not clothed with all Christian graces? He may be out of employment. What then? He has the more time for religious enjoyment. He may be starving. Ah! he is an heir of eternal life! What more does he need?

Thus reasons these reformers, and they are ready to denounce as infidels any general scheme for remedying the social evils under which mankind is laboring.

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